

The passage of the Affordable Health Care for America Act by the House on Saturday was an historic event for our nation, and an important step in insuring that health care is not simply a privilege for some, but a guaranteed right for all.

This success, however, did not come without disappointments. Although the bill includes provisions that will expand access to affordable and high-quality care, the inclusion of the Stupak amendment restricts access to comprehensive women's health services, and is a regressive departure from our nation's long-standing policy on abortion.

The Affordable Health Care for America Act should be a symbol of America's progress and commitment to building a health care system that combats the inefficiency, exploitation and discrimination that prevented millions from receiving the care that they needed and deserved. It is unconscionable that we can preserve an individual's right to choose their health care provider while eliminating a woman's "right to choose" in the new Health Exchange.

As we embark on the next chapter of health care reform, we must not dilute our fundamental principles that ensure health equity in the name of compromise. It is my sincere hope that my colleagues in the House and Senate will work together to deliver a bill to the American people that preserves what works while creating the foundation for us to meet our needs and goals in the 21st century.

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